

MICHELLE'S BUFF ARMS



Forgive me, because I am about to be cattier than I have ever been on my blog.

On the left is a picture of Jodi Kantor wearing short sleeves to a Batsheva Dance Company event (Panache Privee photo).

Below is the picture that accompanies Kantor's latest blog post, taking Michelle Obama to task for her preference for sleeveless dresses (Doug Mills/NYT photo).

Nancy Reagan wore spangled ballgowns. Barbara Bush had fake pearls. Michelle Obama wears her bare arms.

It is February and Washington is freezing, but in appearance after appearance, the first lady displays her long, muscular arms. She is sleeveless on the cover of the new Vogue, she was sleeveless when she discussed menus on Sunday in the White House kitchen, and last night she was sleeveless again, in the House chamber for her husband's first address to Congress. (All of the other women in the room seemed to be wearing long sleeves; a few even wore turtlenecks). If she keeps going at this rate, Mrs. Obama may do to dresses with sleeves what President John F. Kennedy did to men's hats.



[snip]

So Michelle Obama is athletic and disciplined. Yes, fine, but that was pretty clear before we started examining her triceps on a daily basis. Instead, those bare arms seem like a reminder of everything about her we can't see.

In two years, she has shown us a great

deal of herself, more than most of us would share, and yet right now, we actually don't know that much about her. What does she think of the White House, and what does she do all day? Does her husband consult her on any of the difficult decisions he faces? Is the "Mom-in-chief" really, totally confident that her children are going to come through this just fine? In a few years, will she still look as confident as she did last night, or will she reach for cover? And is she comfortable as she looks in those skimpy tops, or is she actually freezing?

Now, as someone who has pretty decent arms myself (though not as great as Michelle's), let me explain something to Ms. Kantor that she is likely unable to relate to: those of us that got 'em proudly flaunt 'em. There's no need to look for some hidden meaning about that. We work out, as a result our arms look great, and they are a feature we show off the way other women flaunt boobs—though the boob-flaunters never seem to attract this much pettiness for their choice to flaunt. (I also have an affinity for formal tops that resemble jog bras because I happen to love wandering around in jog bras—but I can't speak for Michelle on that count.)

And oh, by the way, I apologize to all those I spent inauguration night with for the number of times I shrieked, "It is so cool that we have a buff first lady" when pictures of Obama and Michelle came on. It's about time we had a female role model that is so athletic.

But since we're discussing hidden meanings, I wonder (and this is why I've included the photos under fair use). Do you think that Kantor's ridiculous attempt to deconstruct Michelle's triceps says more about Kantor's insecurities about her reporting or about her own flabby arms?